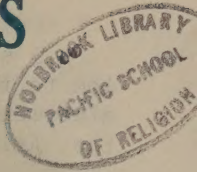


JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS



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REFLECTIONS ON THE EACC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

by Chuzo Yamada, General Secretary

In evaluating the recent EACC Assembly held in Bangkok, Thailand, January 30-February 8, it is necessary to consider the past history of the EACC. As everyone is well aware, the EACC has faced many difficult problems in the past and has issued many statements with regard to its future life. I cannot help thinking how comparatively easy it has been for us to make such statements but how seldom we have acted upon them locally.

Whereas previous consultations have consisted largely of lectures, the 1968 Assembly was primarily a conference of study and work. Pre-consultations on Urban-Industrial Mission, Laymen Abroad and other topics provided a great deal of food for thought and action at the Assembly.

It was stressed that, in spite of the fact that a high percentage of Asians live in rural situations, the effects of rapid social change caused by urbanization and industrialization are inescapable. At the urban-industrial sessions attended by my associate, Mr. Manierre, the appointment of a full-time secretary, Harry Daniels, of India, and of a working committee to be chaired by Professor Masao Takenaka, Doshisha School of Theology, Kyoto, was recommended to and passed by the Assembly to keep EACC member churches informed and to encourage joint efforts to meet the needs created by social change.

The cooperation of professional Christian workers and laymen, both Asians and persons from overseas, in nation-building--especially industrial and economic development--was examined by the Laymen Overseas consultation, as was the subject of ways of sharing their common faith.

The increasing deterioration of the Vietnam situation was the source of great concern to Assembly delegates. Much time was spent in prayer and in the discussion of what East Asia churches should do. Recognizing that, in spite of the risk of being misunderstood, the churches must continue their efforts to relieve the miseries of the Vietnamese people, the Assembly voted to continue emergency work through the Asian Christian Service, established by the EACC in 1965. ACS Director de Lanerolle, attended the Assembly, but his return to Vietnam was delayed until February 15 due to the fighting in and around Saigon.

A statement expressing Asian Christian support for the "search for a solution to the armed conflict" was drawn up. Much weaker than the WCC or NCCUSA statements, it was representative of the various opinions which prevail in the East Asian countries.

It is important to note that the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church was received into membership of the EACC.

SECULARIZATION AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian school chaplains and teachers and church school teachers, many of them intimately acquainted with the issues of student strikes and demonstrations, took a look at "The Task of Christian Education in a Time of Secularization," in a study seminar sponsored by the NCCJ Church Education Department, February 19-21 in Tokyo.

Defining secularization for the conference was Professor Yoshinobu Kumazawa, Tokyo Union Seminary, who described it as "the basis of Christianity; that is, it is God's work in the world." The task of Christian education, he continued, is "to nurture the responsible self" who can participate in God's work in the secular world. A panel of educators and chaplains opened discussion on problems faced in the attempt to "nurture the responsible self" in the modern urban society.

Said Chaplain Toshihiko Hayami, Rikkyo University, "The students in Christian schools can talk about things ontologically. They use such words as 'fellowship' or 'a true person' beautifully. But when they move into action, these words don't mean a thing. They act very functionally. However, we student leaders are just the opposite. We think functionally and act ontologically."

A literature professor pointed out that students read writings critical of Christianity by Sartre, Camus, or the so-called "death of God theologians" first, before they know anything about Christianity. That makes it very hard for the teachers to teach them anything else about Christianity, he said.

The trend of the thinking was that Christian education should hold to the goals which have been central to it from the beginning but that it is essential to "speak in the language of the urbanized generation."

Curriculum and teaching training were particular concerns for those responsible for church school education. More adequate teaching training is an urgent need, they agreed.

UNITED CHURCH SENDS PEACE LETTER

The United Church of Christ in Japan has expressed its hope that the United States will stop the bombing of North Vietnam and start negotiations to end the Vietnam War, in "A Letter for Peace in Vietnam," addressed "To the Churches and the People of The United States of America." Dated February 21, the letter was sent by Moderator Masahisa Suzuki, in the name of The United Church of Christ, to the heads of major denominations and interdenominational groups in the United States.

Expressing regret over the failure of recent efforts to arrange peace discussions, the letter says,

We hope that the United States will begin an unconditional cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam and, together with the NLF, whose power is already evident in South Vietnam and cannot be underestimated, will start negotiations to end the war.

The three-page letter makes five points with regard to the present situation: 1) the nature of the NLF as a people's movement; 2) the lack of good-will toward America on the part of a large percent of the people of Vietnam and the part played by military action and aid in the increasing corruption; 3) the sacrifice of non-military personnel to a battle between ideologies; 4) the widespread opposition of the people to the Japanese government policy which is closely allied with that of the United States; 5) concern over Japan's responsibility for the war, growing out of its invasion of Vietnam during World War II and over the economic benefits Japan is now enjoying as a product of the war.

MISSIONARIES TO HEAR VIEWS OF YOUTH

Two hundred missionaries, who are related to The United Church of Christ in Japan and assigned to evangelistic, teaching, social work, and administrative work in Japan, will focus on what Japanese youth are thinking, saying and doing at their annual conference to be held in Atami, March 26-28.

A student panel and the film, Wakamonotachi, "Youth" will be used to sharpen perception while development groups will give opportunity to delve more thoroughly into personal relationships and responsibilities.

Speakers include Rev. Yoichiro Saeki, Rev. Maclyn Turnage, Rev. Robert Fukada, and Ref. Keiji Kuniyasu.

LINKS IN WORLD-WIDE PRAYER CIRCLE

On Friday, March 1, Japanese women joined the world-wide circle of prayer of church women participating in World Day of Prayer meetings in cities and villages around the world. In Tokyo more than three hundred women worshipped at the St. Paul University Chapel, following the Common Order of Prayer prepared by Mrs. Selvarantnam of Ceylon. Dr. Tamiko Okamura, the first woman to receive the D.D. degree from a Japanese university, was the speaker. From Hokkaido to Kyushu, many similar meetings were held, with offerings received for Christian work in Nepal and Brazil.

CHILDREN GIVE FOR MISSION IN LATIN AMERICA

More than \$3,333 was contributed by Japanese church and school children for Christian work in Latin America during the 1967 Christian Education Emphasis Week, according to the report made by Chuzaburo Tonosaki, general secretary, NCCJ Church Education Department, on February 28.

More than \$2,000 from the total offering of \$5,500 will be used for educational materials and area conferences to foster the "passion for mission" among children. Christian Education Emphasis Week is sponsored annually in September by the Church Education Department, the Education Association of Christian Schools and the Nursery School and Kindergarten Association. Latin America was chosen in view of the fact that four denominations--The United Church of Christ in Japan, The Anglican Church, The Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Japan Baptist Convention are contributing personnel and funds to Christian work among Okinawans and other Japanese, as well as Latin Americans.

Previous areas which Japanese children have studied and to which they have sent offerings include The Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, the Schweitzer Hospital Mission in Africa, and the South Pacific.

SEMINARIANS LEARN FROM MASS MEDIA EXPERTS

Lutheran seminary graduates gained a new perspective when Lutheran Hour Producer Isoji Sekiya told them, "Mass communications must play the role of John the Baptist." His remarks came during a tour of advertising agencies and newspaper and broadcasting studios arranged for the 1968 graduating class of Tokyo Lutheran Theological Seminary by the Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service, Tokyo and the Japan Lutheran Hour.

Orion Advertising Agency Michio Fujimoto described the role of modern advertising and its possible applications to Christian evangelism. At the new Dentsu Advertising Agency headquarters, seminarians saw how consumer's reactions to advertising media are measured by computers and electronic devices and pondered the results if reactions to sermons were measured.

"You'd be surprised how little your church locations are known " one of the experts told the men. "You must advertise them better and make them more accessible to the public."

The tour also sat in on a recording session of the Lutheran Hour, which is broadcast weekly in both musical and dramatic formats adapted for Japanese listeners.

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL MEETS IN 21ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The NCCJ will hold its Annual Assembly at Tozanso, Gotemba, from 1:30 p.m., March 19, through 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 20. In addition to the regular committee and division matters, attention will be focused on three issues of immediate concern:

- 1) The possible restructuring of the present Christian Council into a Council of Churches;
- 2) Current international and domestic social issues;
- 3) The Christian Pavilion for Expo '70.

The proposal regarding the restructuring of the Council would provide for a more effective joint witness of the member organizations and churches through the strengthening of the total life and work of the functional divisions.

In international affairs, four topics to be considered are the War in Vietnam, The Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the return of Okinawa to Japan, and Japan's relations with China, of special interest will be preparations for the forthcoming conference on Peace in Asia, between the NCCUSA and the NCCJ, to be held in Japan in September.

Two matters of vital importance to Japanese as Christian citizens--religious liberty and the preservation of the present Constitution--will be discussed.

With regard to the Osaka Exposition, it is hoped that a joint Roman Catholic-Protestant exhibit will be possible, demonstrating the Oneness of Christians in Jesus Christ and their common concern for the "progress and harmony of mankind."